



AETC Bases News Clips

LUKE AFB, AZ



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Final criteria released for base closures

by Darryl Henning
assistant managing editor

The Pentagon last week announced the final criteria the Base Realignment and Closure Commission will use in 2005 to determine which military bases in the country will be closed.

The Department of Defense has determined that about a quarter of the nation's installations need to be shut down to help transform the country's armed forces into more mobile fighting units. The president will appoint individuals to the nine-member BRAC this week.

According to the Pentagon spokesman releasing the criteria, the primary criteria the BRAC will use will be the military value of facilities, including their available land and airspace for training.

That value represents the ability of the installation to contribute to DOD future mission capabilities and operational readiness, Philip Grone, principal assistant deputy undersecretary of defense for installations and environment, said in a Feb. 26 interview with the American Forces Radio and Television Service.

Other criteria include each base's ability to carry out military missions; ability to rapidly mobilize forces; cost of operations; cost savings projected, including the number of years it would take for the savings to exceed closing costs; ability of surrounding community infrastructure to support forces and their missions; environmental impact; and economic impact on nearby communities.

"Ultimately, the secretary must base his recommendations principally on how it contributes to our current and future mission capabilities, how it contributes to military value, how it supports the force," Grone said.

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The Defense Department has been gathering information on all bases within the United States. More review work will continue in the coming months on items such as a force structure plan and infrastructure inventory, Grone said.

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld will make final recommendations on base realignment and closures to the BRAC in May 2005.

Improving our 'warfighting capabilities'

While the mechanics of this latest BRAC process will be similar to previous rounds, the DOD's emphasis on transformational options and a "capabilities-based" approach is a significant change, Grone pointed out.

"We have facilities that we no longer require that are costing us millions or billions of dollars to maintain over their useful life," he said. "Those facilities are not adequate to the mission; we don't need them. Those resources that are devoted to facilities we do not need, need to be converted to warfighting capabilities."

Though no specific percentage of base closures/

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Sheppard AFB, TX



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Sad situation

This really was a significant letter by Name Withheld on Feb. 27th.

The letter was as follows:

"Once again it appears that our local newspaper is afraid to cover a story that may be biased against Sheppard Air Force Base. The day after a Denver newspaper released the news, Lee Weaver was quick to print a story that downplays the significance of the cover-up at Sheppard. For those of us who have spent many years at Sheppard, we know that the problem is significant. The story stated that 'only 24 to 25 cases' were reported. The actual amount probably doubled that number. We hear the stories from the students and we try to guide them in the right direction, but they are afraid of the repercussions. Those of us who are employed by the base also realize that there is no way that the truth may be told. I have personally seen several cases downplayed or even dismissed; but to actually speak to an investigative board would be the end of my career. Yes, a problem

does exist, and I do hope that the new contract between First Step and the base helps. Unless the leadership at Sheppard begins fitting the punishment to the crime, the problem will continue."

Why is this significant? Because the writer is wrong, and on the wrong side of the fence. The numbers I doubt are actually double of those reported, but maybe four times that. Would the writer lose his job if he went and shared his thoughts and experiences to a higher level? You bet. But on the other hand, all a female has to do in this field of training, is use the sexual harassment or assault tool to cover up their training failures, and the trainer (instructor) is guilty, no matter what happened. Guilty first, innocent not an option. The higher-ups are afraid not to prosecute these charges, as it will reflect on them. The number of cases are in the shroud of secrecy that Sheppard has had for years. Why? Because they can. There has to be a medium somewhere. A pretty sad situation.

*Randy Bilsley
Wichita Falls*



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Teams share ideas on closing elementaries

Ann Work

Times Record News

At first, the suggestions that Community Facility Action Team members made Monday about closing some elementary schools and renovating others sounded like the same suggestions made three years ago.

Close Huey and Fannin. Build a new building on one campus.

Close Austin and Lamar. Build a new school near Lamar.

Similar solutions came from PBK Architects, a consulting firm paid for three years ago by the school district to study Wichita Falls schools.

But the suggestions soon took a sharp turn.

"We're probably a little more radical in this, which I think we should be," said John Daughtery, a spokesman for the third study group.

His group proposed tearing down Alamo, 91-year-old Houston, 78-year-old Ben Franklin and 75-year-old Crockett and building new schools on all sites.

He pointed to the \$15.3 million cost to renovate the group of schools that his

small group had been assigned to discuss.

The suggestions were a "first pass" in a "work session deluxe" for the 35-in-attendance Community Facility Action Team members. The group, which consists of 46 official members, has met since October to study the 21 elementary school buildings and decide how to downsize some and spruce up the rest.

Each small group was given a "zone" of four schools and asked to consolidate the four schools into three.

Other suggestions included closing McGaha, rebuilding at Bonham, and renovating Fain, Milam, Cunningham, Fowler and Jefferson.

All along, the community team has been instructed not to touch Sheppard Elementary, which sits on the Sheppard Air Force Base. Team member Trey Sralla said he'd been hearing from military families he knew that the Air Force was interested in phasing out schools on bases.

"I have a new To Do List as of 8 a.m. tomorrow morning," said Orr, who said he would look into that possibility immediately. "I had not heard that."

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What I like about this country

To the editor:

What I love about this country is that people are afforded the right to voice their opinions in public forums or in print to the editor, no matter how uninformed or misdirected. Mr. Lew Short-

ridge's commentary last week regarding Luke's flight paths is just another brilliant example.

What I love about this country is the pride, discipline, professionalism and commitment of our all-volunteer forces of military men and women. Their selfless dedication provides each and every one of us those wonderful freedoms we all often take for granted.

What I love about this country is the sound of freedom of those F-16s passing overhead, reassuring me that our nation's fighter pilots are getting the training they need, ready to put themselves in harm's way so Mr. Shortridge can submit his simple thoughts to the editor.

As an Estrella Mountain Ranch resident for the last seven years, never once have I seen "hot shot" flying, as he described. The professionalism of our country's fighter pilots is displayed daily, as they pass overhead our community at 4,000 feet, *without* afterburners, and flying a prescribed airspeed of 350 kts. Not only do they fly this because it's regulation and procedure, but it is also monitored by radar facilities on the ground, seeing their every move. Those are the facts.

What I love about this country is that Mr. Shortridge can make a phone call to Luke, complain, and get the noise to "decrease quite a bit lately."

What I love about this country is that people can make uninformed decisions, blame it on their home sales people, and then complain to the newspapers. If people don't like the neighborhood they chose, then move. There is plenty of land out there with nothing but cactus and sand. Try it. We'll like it.

Steve Speckhard
Goodyear

Whiners need reality check

To the editor:

I am responding to those letters/people complaining about the noise due to jets from Luke, and to face reality and stop efforts to save Luke. I, for one, am getting tired of these complaints. Luke Air Force Base was here; you knew it, so

why should we change things for you?

As for the noise you hear, that's the sound of freedom and it sounds a lot better than your crying. You and people like you should take a reality check. We must never forget that we were attacked on 9/11 and there is a constant threat by those who want to destroy our way of life. We must face evil. The way to do that is to keep Luke "at the ready."

As for the two horses and a mule, I need them to do what they did in the Old West: Tie the troublemakers (you and the encroachers) to the mule, and drag them out of town and back to where they came.

Cathy and Voule Kapetanakis
Waddell



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He should take his own advice

To the editor:

I am constantly amazed by the gullibility of the American public and their inability to take responsibility for their own actions. Case in point was the Feb. 11 letter from Lew Shortridge regarding his purchase of a home in Estrella Mountain Ranch and his complaint of the "noise" from Luke Air Base.

I would like to first point out to Mr. Shortridge that Luke Air Base has been in the Valley infinitely longer than any of the developments in the Southwest Valley. Greed from landowners and developers, and I might add, ignorance from homebuyers, has surrounded an air base once in an area of "cactus and sand," with urban sprawl as far as the eye can see. Luke representatives have been reminding the surrounding cities for years of the problems involved when you build homes in the line of flight paths. But it's the same old story, Mr. Shortridge, money speaks louder than common sense.

As to the salesperson who led you astray, excuse me, were you born yesterday? Have you not heard of the old adage "buyer beware"? When those two F-16s

flew over, did that not tell you that you should have been a little more diligent in researching the area before you invested money to buy a home, or is it just easier to blame the salesperson?

As to those "hot shots" that fly over your house, personally, I like to hear the sounds of freedom. It reminds me on a daily basis that those "hot shots" are protecting us from the tragedies of terrorism. It reminds me that someone's son or daughter has died to protect my right to live anywhere I choose.

And, Mr. Shortridge, you should take your own advice — there is plenty of land out there with nothing but cactus and sand.

Cheryl Cotton
Goodyear

Anti-Luke letter served a purpose

To the editor:

As a veteran of the Vietnam War and a retired member of the United States Air Force, I am proud of all the letters sent to the *West Valley View* in response to Mr. Shortridge's letter. I cannot speak for other military retirees, but for me it was great to hear all the positive comments in support of our base and its mission.

I just want to share with all of you the following: On the evening

of 9/11, I watched television (as I'm sure most of you did) as the horror that our nation was going through unfolded. Around midnight that evening, I walked outside and saw a solo military jet flying around Luke and the West Valley prepared to intercept any aircraft that threatened Luke, Palo Verde, or anything else that stood for our freedom. I quietly said a "thank you" that we have a jet fighter base right here in our back yard, ready to respond at a moment's notice.

I would like to thank Mr. Shortridge for sending the letter to the editor that brought out all the positive letters in support of keeping open a very critical military base. Maybe I am selfish, as the base is important to many of us retirees, but I heard no negative comments about our base or its "noisy aircraft" after 9/11.

In closing, just a comment to developers, real estate agents and so on: please be honest and "straight up" with potential buyers about Luke and its mission. And to the critics of Luke, maybe you could relocate to let's say somewhere around Sun Devil Stadium, and listen to the noisy sound of commercial jets taking off every few minutes. If you complain enough, maybe they will close Sky Harbor for you.

Bob McCulley
Litchfield Park

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AETC Bases News Clips

Vance AFB OK



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Northwest Aero applying for pilot training contract

3/8/04

By Robert Barron
Staff Writer

Elaine Johns has a plan for Northwest Aero Services and Enid.

Northwest Aero teaches people to fly airplanes and now teaches flight classes to Air Force undergraduate pilot training officers. The plan is called Introductory Flight Training, or IFT, and there are 400 schools across the United States doing similar training.

The Air Force once operated its own introductory flight training but switched to civilian contractors, which allowed it to sell its aging fleet of T-3 aircraft and save taxpayers more than \$16 million.

IFT tests students for aptitude and motivation for flying. Northwest Aero has been part of the process the past four years. The problem the Air Force has found with having 400 schools across the country is there is no standardization of training.

The Air Force announced recently it will do away with IFT at those 400 schools and establish a central flight training school for all IFT trainees.

Johns wants Northwest Aero to be that place.

She has met with Air Force officials in San Antonio for further information on the program and is encouraged. She also contacted Vance Air Force Base officials for their view on whether such a program would interfere with training at the base, and she said they are supportive.

"Officials at Vance Air Force Base, representing a variety of specialties, reviewed the proposal by Northwest Aero to host the single-source flight screening program for pilot and navigator training for the Air Force," said 1st Lt. Jason Bishop, a public affairs officer at Vance. "Vance sees the impact to its flying operations to be minimal.

"Aside from minor procedural changes, the screening program should not have a major impact on Vance Air Force Base operations."

Johns' training would be east of the normal Vance flight patterns, she said. She also plans to utilize airports in Perry and Blackwell-Tonkawa.

By using those airports, she said her training traffic would not be any more than it is now at Enid Woodring Regional Airport.

"It could be a win-win situation for Vance, Enid and the civilian population," she said.

If successful in being selected to host the program, Johns expects 300 to 1,500 students a year at her facility. At full capacity, she anticipates training about 125 students a month, with a new streamlined 25-hour program that would be completed in about a month. The program is designed by the Air Force.

Johns would work in a partnership with Northern Oklahoma College, which will provide lodging and meals for participants.

NOC has an associate's degree program in pilot training, she said. She said she wants to work out a bachelor's degree program with Northwestern Oklahoma State University.

The projected date of awarding the contract is January 2005, with implementation to begin in September 2005.

If successful, Johns said she would have to expand her facilities and increase the number of aircraft she has.

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